

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 04688 261526Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 PM-05 L-03 PRS-01
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 4688

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, MASS, PINT, SHUM, HA
SUBJECT: DATT MEETING WITH PRINCIPAL MILITARY OFFICERS

REF: (AL STATE 171535Z DEC 77 (C) (NOTAL),
(B) PORT AU PRINCE 4646 (202130Z DEC 77 (C)(NOTAL)

1. AMBASSADOR JONES REQUESTED THAT DATT ATTEMPT TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET WITH PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF HAITI (FAD'H) FOR THE PURPOSE OF INFORMING THEM OF THE USG'S DECISION TO DENY TWO EXPORT LICENSES (MC CASE #42821 AND MC CASE #45120) FOR THE PURCHASE OF A TOTAL OF 600 REVOLVERS. IT WAS AGREED THAT DATT WOULD TRY TO ARRANGE THE MEETINGS TO CONCIDE WITH THE AMBASSADOR'S AUDIENCE WITH PRESIDENT DUVALIER.

2. WHILE AMBASSADOR JONES MET WITH PRESIDENT DUVALIER AT 1000 HOURS, DECEMBER 20TH, DATT MET SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH LTG JEAN-BAPTISTE HILAIRE

,
CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE FAD'H, FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY A MEETING WITH COL JEAN THOMAS, EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE FAD'H AND A THIRD MEETING WITH LTC SERGE COICOU, CHIEF OF AMMUNITIONS DEPOT, AND MAJ PROSPER AVRIL, PRESIDENTIAL AIDE-DE-CAMP, BOTH OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD, FAD'H.

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3. LTG HILAIRE AVOIDED EXPRESSING A DIRECT OPINION ON THE DECISION AND ABVIOUSLY DID NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE TAKING SIDES IN THE MATTER

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THIS IS IN COMPLETE CHARACTER FOR HILAIRE AS HE CONTINUES THE EFFORT TO REMAIN ALOOF FROM ENTANGLEMENT IN WHAT HE CONSIDERS POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

4. COL THOMAS, A MEMBER OF THE INNER CIRCLE OF MILITARY ADVISORS TO PRESIDENT DUVALIER, REACTED SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVELY TO THE DECISION. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE USG'S DECISION WAS BASED ON A MISUNDERSTANDING OF GOH PROBLEMS. HE ALSO INDICATED CONCERN THAT THE USG IS MOVING TOO FAST IN THIS AREA VIS-A-VIS GOH'S CAPABILITY TO MAKE CHANGES IN ITS SYSTEM. THOMAS SEEMS TO WANT TO EXPLORE THIS MATTER FURTHER AND ALTHOUGH DATT WAS UNABLE TO CONTINUE THE DISCUSSION DUE TO TIME CONSTRAINTS, THERE WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO PURSUE THE ISSUE WITH HIM.

5. LTC COICOU AND MAJ AVRIL ARE CLOSER TO PRESIDENT DUVALIER THAN ANY OTHER INDIVIDUALS IN THE FAD'H. THEY WERE UPSET AND DISAPPOINTED AT THE DECISION BY THE USG. APPARENTLY, THEY UNDERSTOOD THE DECISION TO REFUSE THE EXPORT LICENSES BUT THEY ARGUED A THEME SIMILAR TO THAT OF THOMAS, THAT THE USG JUST DOESN'T UNDERSTAND THE INTRICACIES OF THE HAITIAN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEM. AFTER A TIME IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THEIR MAIN CONCERN WAS HOW TO EXPLAIN THIS REFUSAL TO THE PRESIDENT. AT ONE POINT THEY ADMITTED THAT PRESIDENT DUVALIER WAS NOT IN FULL CONTROL OF THE SITUATION. AFTER DATT HAD EXPLAINED THAT THE USG WAS NOT PLACING THE BLAME FOR THE ASSAULT ON NEREE DIRECTLY ON THE PRESIDENT, THERE WAS A MARKED DECREASE IN THE ANXIETY OF THE TWO OFFICERS. THEY INDICATED THAT THEY ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT A PATTERN OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS COULD JEOPARDIZE BOTH MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR HAITI.

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6. MEMCON OF ENTIRE CONVERSATION IS BEING POUCHED TO DEPT SEPARATELY.

COMMENT: IN DATT'S OPINION, THE MOST POSITIVE THING TO COME OUT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS WITH ANY OF THE FOUR OFFICERS INVOLVED, IS THE FACT THAT THE SUBJECT WAS BROACHED WITH THESE MEN IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH DEMONSTRATE THAT THE USG MEANS TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH ITS POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THE SHARED EXPERIENCE OF THIS EVENT WILL HELP REINFORCE FUTURE DATT DISCUSSIONS ON THE RELEVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS FACTORS TO US-HAITI MILITARY RELATIONS.

JONES

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